

Children's Health Environmental Coalition

Year of Grant: 2000

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Primary Partner Organizations

Yale University, Rogers & Cowan

The project targets parents of the 4 million new babies born each year in the U.S. This population cuts across all demographic groups and regions. This one-year outreach project has two primary deliverables:

1. A web-based "electronic house" utilizing advanced virtual reality software to enable parents to "walk" from room to room, identifying household pollutants, discover their health impacts on children, understand various pathways of exposure, and find alternative products and services to minimize potential health risks.
2. Promotional media and educational materials (including an educational video, brochure, and public service announcement (PSA) to engage the targeted audience and to build effective utilization of the "e-house" website.

The website will provide a simple and easy-to-use interface to the single largest, and most integrated set of information resources available on environmental health issues in the home. Content for the site will be developed with federal agencies, non-profits and Healthy Homes Initiative grantees, as well as other relevant information providers on children's environmental health.

Promotional media and educational materials will be made available for broad-based distribution via partnerships with pregnancy classes, hospital maternity programs, ob-gyn clinics, and pediatricians' offices. Partnerships with commercial and non-profit media outlets, including TV, radio, print and web-based communications vehicles with access to the targeted market will maximize outreach.

The design, testing and refining of the above deliverables will serve as the basis for launching a large-scale public service outreach campaign aimed at the parents of every new child born in the US. The goal is to culturally expand the common sense concept of "child proofing" the home to include environmental health safeguards.

The project will involve three distinct components:

I. Web design, development and testing, including:

- A. Application design
- B. Development of information architecture
- C. Content development with selected content partners
- D. Technical design
- E. Design of graphic interface
- F. Production
- G. Beta testing
- H. Design enhancement

2. Design, development and testing of promotional and educational media, including:

- A. Message research and development

- B. Creative design of video, brochure and PSA
- C. Focus group testing and creative refinement
- D. Media production
- E. Test promotional roll-out with selected distribution partners

3. Research and Evaluation

Each of the above activities will involve formative research, utilizing focus groups to assure that the design of deliverables engage the target constituencies and address their needs.

The project will evaluate the results of the test promotional roll-out on a variety of levels, including quantitative analysis of the numbers of promotional media exposures, of the numbers of educational materials distributed, and of the numbers of unique visitors to the website. Qualitative analysis of the impact of promotional exposures on different segments of the target audience, of what information is most relevant to user needs, and of the changes in behaviors that are generated will also be evaluated.

The project mobilizes public and private resources, involving cooperation among all levels of government, the private sector and community-based organizations to reach the maximum number of residents with critical information to promote cost effective, preventive measures to correct multiple health hazards in the home environment that produce serious diseases in children. The project specifically focuses on the implementation of media strategies, including print, radio, TV and the web, to increase public awareness of housing related hazards that threaten children, and to disseminate educational resources that empower parents to learn more about housing related environmental health hazards and to take prompt and effective corrective action to deal with them.